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J. David Donahue, Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Correction, has been named to the National Advisory Board of the Prison Partnership program of Habitat for Humanity International. There have been more than 500 Habitat prison partnerships in the U.S., which offer offenders opportunities to volunteer with Habitat affiliates in building houses with families in need of simple, decent, and affordable housing.

Appointed commissioner by Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., in January 2005, Donahue has 24 years of experience in corrections, including service with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, local government and private corrections. He started his career as a corrections officer in 1980 and has held several management positions throughout his tenure. In the early 1990s, Donahue became an auditor for the American Correctional Association and routinely assists governmental jurisdictions on corrections and criminal justice issues. He is committed to progressive, professional and efficient government. His strong support for Habitat for Humanity led to his board membership.

The purpose of HFHI's Prison Partnership National Advisory Board is to provide guidance and support to HFHI's Prison Partnership in implementing its strategic plan. The plan calls for providing opportunities to offenders to help restore neighborhoods and communities and to make positive contributions to society. The plan also seeks to promote growth and development so the offenders can return to the free world as valued members and/or make positive contributions to the incarcerated community.

HFHI's Prison Partnership program was officially launched in July 1999. Since then, offenders around the country have volunteered more than 780,000 hours with local Habitat affiliates. They built over 600 Habitat for Humanity houses at the construction site, pre-fabricated almost 2,000 housing components and worked on more than 500 special projects. Through the Prison Partnership program, communities collaborate with the public, private and non-profit sectors to build safer communities while preparing offenders for a successful return to the community, especially in the workforce, and promoting positive change in offender behavior. In volunteering with Habitat, offenders learn marketable construction-trades skills, improve their self-esteem and self-worth, develop the values inherent in helping others, and develop strong and positive relationships with the community into which they may be released. In partnering with Habitat for Humanity, correctional systems experience improved intra-facility relationships, reduced offender idleness and enhanced academic and vocational education programs.

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating substandard housing worldwide. HFHI seeks to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action and invites people from all walks of life to work together in partnership to develop communities with safe, decent, affordable shelter.